How Do the People Accept These Facts?

a) The Fear among the People

[P1 P2a] A great fear of these murderers who are in the service of the Ulan permeates the whole life of the Khasi; this feeling is still especially strong in the kingdoms of Sherra, Nongkrem, and Mawphrem. Naturally they guard themselves well from people who are supposed to be in possession of a devil snake and they often do not even dare to speak their names out loud for fear that misfortune could befall them. Many of them are certainly known by the people; others are just guessed at. We tried very hard to get a photograph of such people who are considered to be Ulan owners; but we met only with complete refusal from them. Their bad conscience probably made them fearful. I was able to photograph the house of a woman Ulan worshipper in Mawrel, several [P1] miles away from Sherra. In contrast to most of the Khasi huts, indications of wealth were evident on the outside, since the hut was covered with tin. In spite of all my pleas the woman could not be prevailed upon to have herself photographed. Such an idea frightened her so that she cried out loud: "O, we are investigated so much!"

• [P2a]

[P2 P3] At night a Khasi does not readily trust himself alone outside of his hut. If he is overtaken by darkness on the way home, he may be seen hurrying towards his home, singing or calling in a loud voice from time to time to give himself courage. A single man, even if he does not have to go far from his hut to work is not likely to go without his big knife — ka wait — under his arm to protect himself against all possible attacks. The people usually go together (in groups)

10: Rodney E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 AR? Khasi AR?

society.' Among the matrilineal Central Bantus, Richards says that the determining factor in residence at marriage is the marriage payment 'in the type of goods and services which the bridegroom gives (Richards, 1950, p. 122). However, the Khasi have no such custom in the marriage contract, it is therefore out of the question to explain the two types of residence in this way. In the case of the Khasi, the determining factor is the type of marriage with relation to the rule of inheritance and ownership of property, which is closely related to the structure of the clan. Khasi marriages can be divided into two categories i.e., marriage with an heiress and with a non-heiress. Marriages with an heiress must be uxorilocal. This accounts for category 1 or 3 of the household pattern. On the other hand, marriages with a non-heiress become neolocal and correspond to category 2 of the household unit.

IV. Husband and Wife

A man married to an heiress, usually lives with his wife's parents and her unmarried or divorced brothers and sisters. For a man, life after marriage under such circumstances require great adjustment and endurance. The husband's status is especially weak when a male member of the wife's kin lives in the same household. The management of property and all economic activities are entirely controlled by the authority (wife's brother or maternal uncle) of the clan. The husband works in the wife's field under constant supervision from the authority. Both economic activities and domestic affairs are always under the management of the authorities. The children have more attachment to, and are more obedient to, the maternal uncle than to the father. The tie between the uncle and the nephew is so strong that the father is rather like an additional member of the household. He is the last person to be introduced to visitors.

This family system is closely reflected in the daily behaviour. When we visited the Khasi household of a youngest daughter, if a man (obviously the husband) came first to greet us, he always said "please wait, my wife (or mother-in-law) is coming." And it was the wife who entertained us, offering tea or pan and discussing matters with us, while her husband remained silent in the corner of the room, or in the next room. If her uncle or brother was there, he would be the person who talked to us, while his niece or sister served us. In such a case, we were seldom introduced to the husband. When I was working at Shella, I happened to stay in such a family. I had hardly any opportunity to talk to the husband during the two weeks' of my stay. He left the house very early in the morning and came back late in the evening from the fields. While he was at home, he was

sentiment, in spite of his forming an independent domestic unit. Such a man with two households, the family of orientation and of procreation, says "one leg is in my sister's house and the other is in my wife's," and he feels more at home in his sister's. In villages, whenever a Khasi man in such a position invited me, I was always taken to his sister's (or sister's) house, his *iing*, not to his wife's. There I was warmly welcomed with highest respect by the women of the household as the guest of their uncle (or of their brother), the head of the *iing*. Khasi men whom outsiders often regard as hopeless in their social position, thus enjoy the highest status in their *iing*.

One Khasi gentleman who occupies a fairly high post in the Government, at Shillong, leaving his wife (non-Khasi) and children at Shillong, to my question "when you go to Shillong into which house do you first step," immediately replied, "As soon as I get back to Shillong, I take the way to my sister's home and there take the evening meal with them, enjoying their talk. Then I go to my wife's house where my loving children are waiting." This shows a typical Khasi man's psychology in relation to a family of orientation and of procreation. His first concern on coming back to his homeland is whether his sister and her children are well, since he is the man of authority in that *iing*. He feels much more relaxed in his sister's house where he is held in higher regard and more cared for.

I came across many similar cases. In Jaintia and Shella, such men on returning from their work, often have their evening meal with their sisters though their wives are waiting for them. Furthermore, if they choose to do so, they sleep at their sister's house without ever going back to their wife's house. This results in an unstable married life, where a wife has to face a psychological handicap caused by the occasional absence of the husband, in spite of her advantageous position in a matrilineal and uxorilocal system. Many wives worry every day over whether or not their husbands will come to their house at night. And often this concern changes into sadness and loneliness when the husband does not return for several days on end. The wife knows her husband is at his sister's house in the same village. But she has no right to fetch her husband home. As in Western social dancing, the women have to wait till their partners come. During my field work I often came across these lonely women, just waiting for their husbands, each knowing he was only a few houses away. Though these Khasi women never show their feelings of loneliness in the presence of others, I, being a female anthropologist, was often told of the sadness of their married life. The situation of these women can be more easily understood if we remember the process of the segmentation of the *iing*, which separates each married woman from her descent group, her natal *iing*.